

THE Christian History;

Containing Accounts of the Propagation and Revival
of Religion in Great Britain, America, &c.

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Saturday MAY 19. 1744. § N<sup>o</sup>. 64.  
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Revival of Religion at MIDDLEBOROUGH continued.

I Tried them with *Lectures* in public and private; and increased as I see their Attention awakened, from *one* public Lecture to *two*, besides one or two monthly Meetings: Yet no visible Success. Yet in the *Summer Months* following, there were *four* or *five* of the Church awakened, who were before very blameless. There are many among us will bless God I believe eternally for the Ministry of the Rev. Mr. Daniel Rogers; whose Name will be precious with his spiritual Children. The Rev. Mr. Moorhead preach'd in our Skirts; and some were awakened thereby. Some were awakened by an occasional Sermon of the Rev. Mr. Shaw.

In the Beginning of *October* following, on a *Tuesday* I proposed a *Day of Prayer*; and spake to my Brother Shaw for his Assistance. This was our Errand to the Throne of Grace, to ask the *Outpouring of the Spirit on this dry Fleece*. That Week some of my lately awakened Brethren obtained a visit from the Rev. Mr. Crocker: they appointed a *Lecture* for him the *Friday*; which pleased me to hear of on my Return from my Journey. He preach'd *next Morning*, one cried out: the little Assembly was struck with Awe and Seriousness; which gave some Hopes of a Revival. He promises a Visit on *Monday*; of this public Notice was given the *next Day*, the *Sabbath*. All *that Day* my Hearers seem'd very attentive, and some Meltings.

The *next Day* being the 23d Day of *November*, 1744. Mr. Crocker came. We began about one: He preach'd from *Rom. 8. 1.* This he opened largely: giving the Characters of them that were in CHRIST; and infer'd the Misery of those who found not the Characters in themselves of

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their being in CHRIST ; there was nothing but Condemnation for them, shewing what that Damnation was, &c. After *Sermon* there was an *Exhortation* delivered (c) ; many now melted down. After *the Blessing*, the People generally stayed ; 'till *some* cried out with Terror, which flew like Lightning into every Breast ; I suppose none excepted. I have *written Accounts of seventy-six that Day* struck, and bro't first to inquire what they should do to escape Condemnation. This Inquiry awakened many. There were a Number of Professors of Religion that Day whose Lamps went out : they discover'd there was no Oil of true Grace in them. There were *four* Persons that this Day being left alone in the several Houses to which they belong, were I suppose savingly awakened that Day, by the Consideration, that they were left. After a Stay with the Distressed in Public, many followed us Home : Those that we had not Opportunity to ask openly the State of their Souls and the Reason of their *Out-cry*, repaired to us. They tell us they see now what they never did before ; their original Guilt & actual Sins, and Fear of the dreadful Wrath of the LORD : This filled them with unutterable Anguish. They seemed to be stepping into Hell : This drew Trembling Fear and Cries from them. They complain of hard Hearts, and blind Eyes ! That they should never see before ! Especially Unbelief ! O how dreadful to give the GOD of Truth the Lye ! They now complain they can't believe, find their Hearts full of Enmity to GOD, to CHRIST, to his Holiness, his Word, and Saints. *Scores, this Day*, told me of their Hatred of me above any one. But to hear the *young People* crying and wringing their Hands, and bewailing their Frolicking and Dancing, their deriding public Reproofs therefor, was affecting.---O how heavy now did their Contempt and Neglect of CHRIST appear to them, as the Effect of these corrupt *Principles* of Pride, Unbelief and Enmity, and vicious *Practices* of Mirth and Jollity. Their Mouths are at once filled with Arguments to justify GOD in their eternal Damnation, and condemn those Principles and Practices they had been ruled by and led into ; and this from Scripture. This the peculiar Work of the Spirit to convince of Sin and Unbelief.

(c) This was delivered by Mr. *Thacher* himself ; tho' he modestly forbore to mention himself, and rather chose to give the *Names* of other Instruments.

Well,

Well, the next Evening, we had another Lecture. Tho' an excessive Rain, yet many came, and the Word was powerful. Thus the LORD began to hear, as soon as 'twas in our Hearts to ask.

From this Time, there was an uncommon Teacheableness among my People: Scarce one Word of Counsel seemed lost, or a Sermon in vain. From this Time, they must have four Sermons in a Week; two Tuesdays, two Thursdays: *The Word of the LORD was very precious in those Days.*----- In a few Days from that 23d of November, so greatly to be remembred, there appeared to be above two Hundred awaken'd: and it was some Days, and Weeks, and Months, before they were brought sensibly to close with CHRIST; most of them tarried long in the Birth: And so far as I am capable to judge, gave as distinct and clear an Account of their espousing to JESUS CHRIST; the Means, his Word of Promise and Time, as they could of any Action of human Life. This not all in the same Manner under the preparatory Work: but all come to the same espousing closing Act; when they were brought out of Darkness into marvellous Light, when the Prison Doors were opened, their Captive Souls set free, when set free from the oppressing Burdens of Guilt they so long bare, when the LORD led them into the Wilderness and there spake kindly to them, saying *Live*. Now they understood what it was to have the everlasting Gates and Doors of their Souls set open, and the glorious King entering. How pleasantly affecting to hear them tell of their Submission to GOD's Righteousness, resigning to the Hands of Justice, and how sweetly and speedily in a Moment they found themselves inclosed in the everlasting Arms of Mercy! Who would not be encouraged to come to this Submission? To hear them speak of the Glories of the REDEEMER and his infinite Fulness; how oft would they break out, *Oh! we are sure, from GOD's Word and our own Experience, there is enough for all, every one in the World!*

This awakes Professors, very moral and blameless in Life, to inquire into their own standing: The most find they built on the Sand, that they lived to themselves, rested in their Duties, were meer Hypocrites; and after a while, they joyfully tell me; 'I have found my Feet on the Rock; I never knew what it was to have my Will subdu'd and Heart changed, and CHRIST there, till now: And now I know

‘I have the Witness in myself, and the SPIRIT in the Word witnesses with my Spirit: (I am sure Religion is Real, no Fable, no Delusion! CHRIST is Meat indeed, and Drink indeed: I never knew what Pleasure was before CHRIST gave it me; and what he hath given is better than all the World.’ Such an Account, I suppose, there are *more than two Hundred* can give.

The Work grew daily; the Numbers were increased; near 170 the following Year, joined to the Church.

Thus far the Rev. Mr. Thacher proceeded in his Account for some Months before he died. And as the *Revival of Religion* has been so very remarkable in his Congregation; it is a thousand Pities and a Loss to the Publick, that he did not go on to finish it. For he was neither inclin’d to *Enthusiasm* nor *Antinomianism*: but was fully and heartily in the Doctrines of the Gospel as expounded in the *Assembly of Westminster’s shorter and larger Catechisms*, and *Confession of Faith*: Which from their first Publication about 1640 have been embraced by the Churches of *New-England* as well as *Scotland*, and which he apprehended to be the *best Exposition* of the *scripture Doctrine*, on Earth: And according to *these*, which he found agreeable also to his own most clear and sure *Experience*, he thought and judged of *this great Revival*.

It was so remarkable in his Congregation; that we have been well informed by some pious Persons there; that tho’ one of the dearest Places for Religion in the Land before, yet for about *eighteen Months* after that sudden Breaking forth on Nov. 23. 1741, the Place became for extraordinary lively and continual *Praying, Reading, Singing, Preaching, Hearing* and *religious Conferences*, like a Heaven on Earth. Thus it was to the Taste of those pious Souls who cou’d take a vastly greater Pleasure in holy Exercises and Discourses than in worldly Conversation. To the Relish of others, it was disagreeable. And those whose religious Dispositions were not so strong and lively, were also offended; because they tho’t that People minded Religion more than they should, and were so much on the Extreme on that Side as not to mind so much as they shou’d their earthly Affairs. Tho’ it cannot be expected in the present State, but that the *Infirmities, Mistakes* and even *Corruptions* of humane Nature, as well as *Suggestions* of Satan, will frequently if not continually mix with those
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religious Ideas, Impressions and Dispositions excited by the DIVINE SPIRIT : and by the *divine Word* with common, serious and impartial *Observation*, must we carefully distinguish between the one and the other.

Instead of Mr. *Thacher's* remaining *design'd Account* ; we now present some Letters of his : which, tho' *Two* were wrote before the Revival, and they and some of the others hint at some Things mentioned before : yet because they confirm the former Accounts, breath his pious Spirit, and are the *last* Communications we are in this World to receive from him, we hope will not be unacceptable to the pious Reader.

A Letter from the Rev. Mr. Thacher of Middleboro'

Middleborough, March 30. 1741.

Rev. Sir; and dear Brother,

YOURS of the 2d Instant was thankfully receiv'd, with that blessed Man of God the Rev. Mr. *Tennent*. We are thankful to God and you who sent him into this sleepy, secure and dead Part of the Vineyard. I had the Privilege to hear him *five Sermons* : at *Lakenham*, from the *Prodigal Son* ; in my own *Pulpit*, from that Lesson, *I was alive without the Law once*, &c. That Evening he and *twelve* of his Company lodg'd with us. He observ'd, he hardly ever but once in his Life perceiv'd such a Flatness of Spirit, such a Straitness, as tho' the Spirit was withdrawn, &c. But 'twas a good Sermon, tho' not compar'd with that most excellent Discourse at *Lakenham* ; wherein in many Respects I never heard Man speak like him ; wick so much Grace, so much of the evident Presence of CHRIST, with inimitable Skill dividing the Word.

I had the Pleasure of his Company to the Rev. Mr. *Perkins's* : where I heard *three Sermons* that Day and in the Evening : the first, of the *Jailor* ; the second, *Luke 13. 24.* the third, *All Things are ready, come to the Marriage*. Your Character of him was with Justness of Thought : It was high ; yet verily he out-did it. I was compell'd by Pain to leave him. *Peter* waited on him to *Taunton* : from whence he went to *Berkley* : Since which, have heard nothing.

There

There were some few *young ones* in my Family and Neighbourhood under Awakenings ; especially thro' God's Goodness among my Children. His Discourse in Publick, and personal in Private was melting to them. Oh ! let your Prayers be, that they may all be effectually called, soundly and savingly converted.

Oh Brother and Sister ! I rejoice, I bless God with you and for you, for the Pledges of Covenant Grace to your Children.---My Love, my dear Love to---and Cousin --- and ----. Let them stand fast in the Lord, watch and pray : They are but putting on the Harness : and my dear little --- too ! Tell her that her Cousin ---- is under Awakenings : He leaves his Play for his Book, and his Company for Retirement. Oh Brother and Sister ! If God gives our Children Covenant-Grace, it's our best Portion. I bless God, I hope every one of my Children and my two old Negro Servants are under Awakening ! Oh ! help by your Prayers, that they may not be like *Felix* or *Agrippa's*.---Oh ! when CHRIST girds on his Sword, it *shall* conquer.

This our State *within* Doors ; wherein, if I have been freer into your Bosoms than you were of yours ; it is but to magnify the Grace of God, & to excite Glories to that Grace. Our State *without* is sad : more dark than ever. It seems as tho' God is about to break up House with us. Mr. Tennent says NO ; but to revive his Work. He is glad to see the Devil so vexed ; says, 'Tis a good Sign.

Heartily thank you for your Kindness to our Son ---- who came Home under great and deep Impressions, which seem deeper daily : May the Issue be Glory to rich Grace. Thank you for every Remembrance in your Prayers. None can need them more ; nor we never more than now.

I am your affectionate, loving Brother,

PETER THACHER.

Middleborough, May 25. 1741.

Rev. and dear Brother,

I Thank you for your additional and repeated Kindness.---I rejoice to hear your Hands are so full of *Harvest-Work* : But should your Heart be so taken up, as to forget the dry Place ? I wish you cou'd find Leisure to send me a particular Account of the Success of the Gospel. If it's too tedious to yourself ;

yourself; I humbly beg the Favour of my Kinsman: from whom I hope to receive, if not a *living*, yet a *written* Epistle.

I desire to rejoice to hear that the Lord Christ is carrying on his own Work with such a mighty Arm in so many Places: while or notwithstanding it is so *languishing among ourselves*. If it be the Dawn of the glorious Gospel-Day; I trust the whole Earth shall soon be filled with the Knowledge of the *Saviour*, except the *Places given to Salt*: amidst this, or consequent soon upon it; either that dreadful Sentence shall be declared in Heaven, *Let him that is filthy be filthy still*; or some *overflowing Scourge* shall be commissioned to cut off all, Old and Young, that have not the happy Mark of Regeneration.

Dear Sir, These are my Thoughts of the *present Time* we are in. And from this Thought, I do now most earnestly request, you wou'd make all your Interest to engage the fervent Prayers of all that have any Interest in Heaven, for a poor, unprofitable *Minister*, and his secure and hardened *People*; that he may be instrumental to save himself and them that hear him, that there may be the *Outpouring of the Spirit of Conversion* on him and his *dry Fleece*. O Sir! This is the greatest Kindness you can do! Nothing hath hindred my *resigning the Pastoral Office*, but my being at a Loss to fix on a *Farewel-Sermon*, that many Times within these *three Months* I have laboured to engage in. Our Divisions swallow all that's good.

Amids all my disconsolate Trials, that yet are less than mine Iniquities deserve; I have some comfortable Hopes that God is beginning a good Work on many of my Children. Oh! who am I, and what is our Father's House, that the Lord shou'd speak Good to our House for a great while to come! While my Children will not be Heirs to the Wealth of the World, if he makes them Heirs of the Kingdom; Oh the Praise! In *this Covenant* is all my Desire. I rejoice with you and Sister and Cousins: To each of whom I send endear'd Salutations. In every Adversity I am your affectionate Brother and Servant.

PETER THACHER.

These were Mr. Thacher's sorrowful Letters before the Revival: But how surprizing was the Change in his next, as follows.

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*Middleborough, Decem. 11. 1741.**Dear Brother,*

I Thought not to have wrote to you again till I had Time to write a particular and large Account of the *wonderful Work of God in both Middleborough Precincts*; especially in *ours*. Our Frolicks are turned into Prayers and Praises! Drinking-Matches at least wholly suspended! Many Families that were *Bethavens*, are now *Bethels*! Many secure and hard hearted Sinners, brought to cry out of their Sins and Dangers! Tho' none in the Time of public Worship, yet as soon as it is over. My *public Lectures twice a Week; Tuesdays and Fridays*. They are not satisfied with one Sermon: Fill my House after public Service, for a further Word: and blessed be God, I have not yet sent them away without one.

Yet all is not enough to silence Opposers. I don't so much wonder at the Infidelity of common Professors, as at Ministers. -- Yet I see not how a *Jannes* and *Jambres* can doubt of its being the *Finger of God*: Especially upon *little Children*: some not above *six or seven Years old*. One last Night at the Meeting-House Door I believe wou'd have fallen down in a Swoon, if I had not catch'd it in my Arms.

One Thing I must not forget; I think almost all the *Indians* that attend our Assemblies, are deeply wounded; and many I hope, savingly and wonderfully wrought upon.

Let me beg an Interest in your fervent Prayers, that I may be faithful and skilful to Souls, and may be instrumental to save them, and not afterwards myself be a Castaway.

Your sincerely affectionate Brother.

PETER THACHER.

His next Letter was of Decr. 21. 1741. which was inserted in our Numb. 52.



A D V D R T I S E M E N T.

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